

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Extension Service
Washington 25, D. C.

Questions and Problems, Indiana

Since the formulation of the Land Use Planning Committees in Indiana in the 1930's, work in agricultural policy has been carried on by the Extension Service. This work has consisted largely of meetings dealing with local governmental problems such as zoning, schools, taxes and governmental expenditures, foreign trade, and agricultural programs involving price and income. This report is directed largely to the program in agricultural policy that is being carried on during the calendar year 1949.

During the latter part of 1948, schools in public policy were offered the various counties. Thirty-four counties out of the 92 requested a public policy school. Because of limited personnel only 13 such schools were held during January, February and March of 1949. At these schools two subjects were presented, one dealing with the agricultural price income problem for agriculture and one dealing with state and local governmental expenditures. These meetings were arranged by the county agricultural agent. From 25 to 75 leaders in each county were invited. The average attendance was 50. The response and interest was good.

Five meetings were held with home economics club leaders on local governmental problems with special emphasis on schools. This information was then taken back by the local home economics club leaders to their local township clubs.

Ten meetings were held with local officials and leaders on county planning and zoning. Requests for such assistance is continually coming in from the counties.

Agricultural policy questions were presented before numerous groups at meetings held at the university, such as the Indiana Bankers Clinic, Coop Managers Meetings and other similar groups. One article was prepared on the subject, "High or Low Farm Price Supports" and printed in the State Economic and Marketing publication. This went to some 25,000 people.

In most meetings basic mimeographed data was presented dealing with the problems involved and the meetings were conducted on a discussional basis.

A course in agricultural policy was taught at the Purdue Fort Wayne Extension Center the winter and spring semester of 1949. There were 64 individuals who completed this course, composed of farmers, elevator operators, bankers, loan appraisers, county agents, vocational teachers, production credit association representatives and others. While this class was a part of the regular university teaching it had an important value from the standpoint of extension education in public policy as the individuals attending the class came from a 10 county area. This class will likely be repeated in two or three other centers in the state.

On June 13, five county agents and four home demonstration agents were called into the university to meet with the members from the County Agent Leader's Office and members of the Department of Agricultural Economics to consider what should be our program in public policy in Indiana. Many good points

were developed at this conference and the general feeling of the county workers was that we should continue to expand our program in the public policy field. This was the opinion of both the county agricultural agents and the home demonstration agents. Plans for the balance of 1949 include:

1. The preparation of a series of leaflets each dealing with a public policy question of interest to farmers.
2. A series of district county agent training conferences at which one-half day will be devoted to public policy questions. This is to train extension personnel.
3. The devoting of one day at the annual extension workers conference to questions of public policy. Definite plans have already been made for this program which will occur in December.
4. Plans are being formulated for a stepped up number of public policy meetings with county groups beginning December 1, 1949. A limited number of policy meetings will also be held between now and then.

In all our work in agricultural policy the emphasis has been upon the facts dealing with the questions involved and the emphasis has been placed on various alternatives and where each policy leads. We very strongly believe that the meetings in agricultural policy should be kept small at the present stage where they may be kept on a discussional basis. As the general public comes to freely accept educational work in this area then they may be enlarged.

Some use has been made of the press and radio in connection with public policy in Indiana but it has been very limited. We do not think at this stage that this is the best way to handle the material. We feel that meetings are one of our most effective ways of extending public policy and that these meetings must be held by more experienced individuals than is required in most other areas of agricultural economics.